

# ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

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## Co-Chairs:

Hon. Clyde Burmaster  
Hon. Barry Weinstein, MD

## Minutes of Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Meeting June 2, 2006

## Members:

James Allen  
Hon. Vince Anello  
Tim Doolittle  
Hon. Wright Ellis  
Matthew Enstice  
Andrew Eszak  
Samuel Ferraro  
Hon. Joel Giambra  
Hon. Timothy Kennedy  
Hon. Kathy Konst  
David Lacki  
Celeste Lawson  
Gregory Lewis  
Hon. Peter McMahon  
Hal Morse  
Jo Nasoff-Finton  
Hon. Sean O'Connor  
Dr. Gary Praetzel  
Melinda Rath Sanderson  
David Roll  
David Rosenwasser  
Hon. William Ross  
Diane Ruzala  
Laura St. Pierre  
Christopher Schoepflin  
Hon. Demone Smith  
Hector Titus  
Timothy Wanamaker  
Peter Wendel

**Present:** Burmaster, Weinstein, Allen, Anello, Ellis, Ferraro, Konst, Lacki, Lawson, Lewis, Morse, Rath Sanderson, Roll, Rosenwasser, Ross, St. Pierre (proxy), Titus, Wendel, Casale, Witul

**Excused:** McMahon, Nasoff-Finton, Praetzel, Ruzala, Schoepflin, Wanamaker

**Absent:** Doolittle, Enstice, Eszak, Giambra, Kennedy, O'Connor, Smith

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m. by Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster and Barry Weinstein, MD. ENRP Member Samuel Ferraro and the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (NCCED) were thanked for hosting the meeting.

Minutes of the March, 2006 meeting were approved.

New members Erie County Department of Environment & Planning Commissioner Andrew Eszak, Erie County Executive Joel Giambra, Buffalo-Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau Director of Tourism David Lacki (replacing Richard Geiger), Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation Incoming President John Percy, and National Electrical Contractors Association Western New York Chapter Manager David Roll were welcomed. Departing members Maria Lehman and David Rosenwasser were thanked for their service to the group. Co-Chair Burmaster commended Rosenwasser for his efforts, saying he was "trying to climb a mountain that has a very slippery slope."

ENRP Administrator Tod A. Kniazuk presented the sustainability update. The beginning balance for the period was \$1,230.56 and the ending balance was \$6,038.08. During the period since the March general meeting membership contributions were received from Empire State Development and the Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation.

## Ad Hoc:

Michael Casale  
Lawrence Witul

## Administrator:

Tod A. Kniazuk

Kniazuk noted that the Sustainability Committee asked all ENRP members to respond to the following action items:

- Invite ENRP to present at your board meetings.
- Refer one potential member.
- Send letters to potential contributors.
- Possibility of hosting a prospective member/contributor event.
- Identify potential grants.
- Let us know of any relationship you have with foundations or corporations.

Subcommittee Chair Hector Titus presented the Economic Development Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed, with approval granted to issue a letter urging New York State to immediately release the casino funding (note: funding was released soon after, and so this letter did not get issued). Approval was also granted to issue a letter to the Giambra administration offering to assist in determining ways to implement electronic permitting. ENRP Member Melinda Rath Sanderson was thanked for her efforts in getting press coverage for our small business assistance website project (the April 14 Business First article was distributed).

Subcommittee Vice-Chair Wright Ellis presented the Government Affairs Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed. Regarding the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS), a group of ENRP members will be meeting with University at Buffalo Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth Director Kathryn Foster on the matter. The Subcommittee reaffirmed its commitment to the timely release of the REDS.

Subcommittee Chair David Rosenwasser presented the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed, with approval granted for David Lacki to become the new subcommittee chair. As Rosenwasser is leaving the area and therefore ENRP, he urged the group to continue its efforts as we work on issues and projects without any ulterior agenda. He also encouraged ENRP to take more demonstrative stands on issues.

Discussion turned to the issue of requiring passports for automotive travel between the US and Canada, and specifically that requirement's negative impact on tourism. Co-Chair Burmaster urged us all to "make our voice roar to Washington on this." He

asserted that anyone who thinks that making people pay a fee for an i.d. is going to make things more secure is fooling themselves when the real issues are that there's so many unsecured areas along our borders and that some of the terrorists were here legally anyway. ENRP Member Vince Anello added that the cross-border mayors have been working on this issue for quite a while, including the mayors of Buffalo, Niagara Falls New York and Ontario, Niagara on the Lake, and Lewiston. He added that 40 of our 50 states do business with Canada. Co-Chair Weinstein suggested that we draft a letter on this issue for all of us to sign at our next general meeting. Lacki volunteered to work on this.

Subcommittee Chair Peter Wendel presented the Transportation Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed, with the issue of bio/alternative fuels referred to the Economic Development Subcommittee for an opinion as to whether this should be a priority for our region.

Niagara River Greenway Commission Administrative Coordinator Rob Belue gave the group a presentation on the Niagara River Greenway ([www.niagaragreenway.org](http://www.niagaragreenway.org)). First, he stated that it was not yet a plan, but a concept. The Greenway Commission was created by Chapter 460 of the laws of 2004. There are 14 commissioners; six state agency representatives, and eight appointed to four year terms (two from the Assembly, two from the Senate, and four from the Governor). Paul Dyster chairs the Citizens Advisory Committee and Ron Moline heads up the Local Governments Committee. The Citizens Advisory Committee is charged with soliciting input from the community, while the Local Governments Committee is comprised of the executives from the 12 municipalities within the greenway.

Belue continued that the impetus for the creation of the greenway came from a letter the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy sent to the governor "years ago." The greenway is a linear system of state and local parks and conservation areas linked by a network of multi-use trails within the greenway area.

The purpose of the Greenway Commission is to undertake actions on waterfront access, compliment economic revitalization of the communities along the river, and ensure the long-term maintenance of the greenway. The Commission does not have any powers of eminent domain, will not hold property or operate any part of the greenway, and will not affect zoning or local laws. Rather, the

Commission will have to gain the mutual assent and participation of each municipality, state agency, and public corporation holding land within the greenway.

The scope of the greenway is from Lake Ontario along the Niagara River to Buffalo; however, at this time it has yet to be determined how far east to draw the boundary. This may be defined by mid-fall. A design team led by Wendel Duchscherer is working on the plan and meeting with stakeholders.

Challenges include staying on schedule, maintaining a positive public image, determining how many of the multiple ideas can be incorporated, and getting approval from the municipalities.

Funding for the plan is coming from the NYPA settlement, grants, and other sources. March 22, 2007 is the completion date for the plan, but Belue noted that implementation may take years.

Buffalo Niagara Partnership Small Business Development Manager Tracey Houston presented to the group on minority and women business enterprise (MBE/WBE) certification and procurement. She explained that currently there are several different certifications, and the goal should be to streamline them; one application process with equal qualifications for everyone. To do this, Houston proposed that the ENRP Economic Development Subcommittee meet with the agencies who certify in our region. There is no specific project in mind; that would be determined by those in attendance at the meeting. The BNP will partner with ENRP on this effort.

Houston also informed the group of the BNP's diversity supplier program which was launched last year to facilitate purchasing relationships between companies and M/WBEs.

David Roll presented a member organization update on the Western New York Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association. The chapter was founded in Buffalo in 2001 as part of the second largest trade association in the nation, headquartered in Washington, DC.

Roll then announced "The Hottest Place To Be Cool – Expo 2007." CEOs, CFOs, and site selectors from around the world will gather in Buffalo on June 12-14, 2007. They are being invited via a dvd by Warren Buffett, and while here they'll hear from Tim Russert,

Tom Golisano, and Marv Levy. Officials from Empire State Development, the BNE, the IDAs, and others will be ready to bring these companies to our region and detail what incentives are available to get them here. They'll also be taken to a series of special events and will learn about the many aspects such as a highly skilled workforce, education, fresh water, low cost power, and quality of life that make our area attractive.

Already Expo 2007 has received commitments from over 300 CEOs, including Daimler Chrysler, Sony, and Intel.

The steering committee is being co-chaired by Roll, ENRP Member Samuel Ferraro, and Kevin Donovan of UAW, and has been working on this for over a year and a half. Several committees are being put together to make the event a success; each committee will ready a message on a particular topic such as manufacturing, hospitality, culture, healthcare, bio-science, etc. The entire event is being facilitated through the Niagara University Hospitality Training and Research Center under the direction of Dr. Debbie Curtis. Those wishing to volunteer should contact Dr. Curtis at [dcurtis@niagara.edu](mailto:dcurtis@niagara.edu)

The US Department of Commerce will be shadowing the event to use as a possible model in other parts of the nation. Roll noted that this event will take place every three years. Ferraro added that this will be the biggest event this region has seen in a long time.

Ferraro presented an update on power relicensing, <http://niagara.nypa.gov>. He informed the group that Niagara University settled. Barring any interventions, on or before 8/31/07 the license will be issued. In Niagara County, 25 megawatts of low cost power was a part of the settlement. The structure to distribute that power is being put together; municipal buildings will receive it, then the excess will be used for economic development.

Ferraro presented an update on the Framework for Regional Growth, [www.regionalframework.com](http://www.regionalframework.com). The final draft document is complete. Leadership and public meetings will be held in July in both counties, and the process will wrap-up shortly thereafter.

There was no old business. Under new business, Lawson noted that with the ILGRG's new Regional Knowledge Network you can no longer link up a legislator with their district (that is, punch in an

address and determine its legislative district). ENRP Ad Hoc Member Michael Casale replied that [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) has an address locator.

The next general meeting date was set for Friday, September 29 at 8:30 a.m. at the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (thanks to ENRP Member Jo Nasoff-Finton). The Co-Chairs thanked the group, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Submitted by Tod A. Kniazuk  
September 22, 2006